

Category 1 – Communication

In conjunction with responding to calls for public safety services, the dispatcher faces challenges every day that require knowledge, judgment, skill, and ability from multiple and varied sources. To meet these challenges successfully, the dispatcher must develop good communication skills in the performance of relevant duties. Expected performance outcomes in this category include the following:

- 1.1 Obtain information related to complaints and/or requests for service from the public, field units, and other agencies.
- 1.2 Perform multiple tasks related to receiving information and dispatching appropriate response units.
- 1.3 Apply standard communication techniques in receiving and transmitting information via radio and telephone.
- 1.4 Disseminate information to the public, field units, and other agencies.
- 1.5 Apply standard communication techniques when handling specialized situations via radio and telephone.
- 1.6 Assist caller(s) by providing initial emergency medical care information to victims of accidents, illness and/or crimes.
- 1.7. Respond to a report of a disaster.

Performance Outcome 1.1

Obtain information related to complaints and/or requests for service from the public, field units, and other agencies.

Training Objective 1.1

Given a written scenario or practical exercise:

- A. Identify two purposes of emergency services communications.
- B. Identify five primary functions of emergency dispatching.
- C. Obtain basic information from caller to send appropriate response unit(s).
- D. Use effective interpersonal skills in crisis situations.

Criteria for Testing: The trainee shall be tested on the following:

- 1.1.1. Identify two purposes of emergency services communications.
- 1.1.2. Identify five primary functions of emergency dispatching.
- 1.1.3. Identify the basic information required to determine which response unit(s) to send.
 - 1.1.3.1. Law enforcement
 - 1.1.3.2. Medical
 - 1.1.3.3. Fire
- 1.1.4. Identify characteristics of a person in crisis.
- 1.1.5. Demonstrate collection of information from a caller related to a crime, traffic incident, medical emergency, fire emergency, animal complaints, and safety hazard. (This may be done in one combined exercise or several separate ones.)

Lesson Plan Guide: The lesson plan shall include the following at a minimum:

1. Identify two purposes of emergency services communications.
 - a. To provide the key link between the public needing assistance and the emergency service provider(s) in the field.
 - b. To facilitate communications between field units and others to expedite the completion of the service to the public.
2. Identify five primary functions of emergency dispatching.
 - a. Communication between the public and the department.
 - b. Communication between members of the department.
 - c. Communication between other public safety departments or other public service agencies.
 - d. Coordination of the response of emergency services personnel.
 - e. Record-keeping.
3. Receive in-person complaints and requests for service from the public and other agencies.
4. Receive officer initiated calls for service and requests from field units.
5. Answer and route routine business calls.
6. Identify characteristics of a person in crisis.
7. Obtain initial complaint-screening information from callers or in-person
 - a. Victims
 - b. Witnesses
 - c. General public
 - d. Other agencies
 - e. Field personnel
8. Obtain additional information from complainants or witnesses.
9. Obtain complete/detailed information for law enforcement emergencies and other requests.
10. Obtain complete/detailed information for dispatching to assist with medical emergencies.
 - a. Public Access Defibrillation awareness §8.01-225

11. Obtain complete detailed information for dispatching to assist with fire emergencies.
12. Obtain complete/detailed information for dispatching to assist with safety hazards.
13. Obtain complete/detailed information for dispatching to assist with complaints from anonymous callers.
14. Obtain complete/detailed information for dispatching to assist with complaints regarding animals.

Performance Outcome 1.2

Perform multiple tasks related to receiving information and dispatching appropriate response units.

Training Objective 1.2

Given a written scenario and practical exercise, perform multiple tasks related to receiving information and dispatching appropriate response units.

Criteria for Testing: The trainee shall be tested on the following:

- 1.2.1. Demonstrate active listening skills to obtain needed information.
- 1.2.2. Demonstrate method used to read, transmit, enter/record information, and speak to response units.
- 1.2.3. Demonstrate method used to monitor and respond to radio transmissions from law enforcement units.
- 1.2.4. Demonstrate method used to monitor and respond to radio transmissions from fire department units, if applicable.
- 1.2.5. Demonstrate method used to monitor and respond to radio transmissions from emergency medical units, if applicable.

Lesson Plan Guide: The lesson plan shall include the following at a minimum:

1. Active listening skills to obtain needed information.
2. Methods that may be used to read, transmit, enter/record information, and speak to response units.
3. Methods that may be used to monitor and respond to radio transmissions from law enforcement units.
4. Methods that may be used to monitor and respond to radio transmissions from fire department units.
5. Methods that may be used to monitor and respond to radio transmissions from emergency medical units.

Performance Outcome 1.3

Apply standard communication techniques in receiving and transmitting information via radio and telephone.

Training Objective 1.3

Given a practical exercise:

- A. Identify general radio codes and general terminology to communicate with response units.
- B. Apply standard communication techniques in receiving and transmitting information via radio and telephone.

Criteria for Testing: The trainee shall be tested on the following:

- 1.3.1. Use of words and terms associated with effective interpersonal skills.
- 1.3.2. Clear and distinct speech using common radio/telephone terminology.
- 1.3.3. Identification of standard codes, military time, and/or phonetic alphabet to conduct police communications/transmissions.
- 1.3.4. Demonstration of effective techniques to calm the emotionally upset citizen and communicate with him or her.
- 1.3.5. Receipt and transmission of information to coordinate communications between field units.
- 1.3.6. Explanation of the critical need for and control of radio traffic.
- 1.3.7. Use of clear speech to broadcast all points bulletins.
- 1.3.8. Identification of information and items of importance about which to brief incoming dispatch personnel to ensure their knowledge of current activities.

Lesson Plan Guide: The lesson plan shall include the following at a minimum:

1. Developing effective interpersonal skills.
 - a. Verbal communication
 - b. Non-verbal communication (body language)
 - c. Written communication
 - d. Listening skills
2. How to speak clearly and distinctly.
3. Use of standard codes, military time, and/or phonetic alphabet to conduct police communications/transmissions.
4. Use of effective techniques to calm an emotionally upset person.
5. Receiving and transmitting information to coordinate communications between field units.
6. Explaining the critical need for and controlling radio traffic.
7. Use of clear speech to broadcast all points bulletins, including review of “breaking” technique for broadcasting BOL’s.
8. Briefing incoming dispatch personnel to ensure their knowledge of current activities.
9. Attending communication meetings, briefings and debriefings relevant to dispatch operations.
 - a. Importance of information presented at meetings and transmitting this to communications staff as a whole.
 - b. Sensitivity and timeliness of some information, e.g., raids, recognition signals, etc.
 - c. Information on major events.
 - d. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) meetings
 - e. Others as may be identified by the instructor

Instructor Note: Advise trainees that they may learn the use of electronic mail, fax communications and other similar equipment unique to their agency during on-the-job training.

Performance Outcome 1.4

Disseminate information to the public, field units, and other agencies using standard communication and dispatching techniques.

Training Objective 1.4

Given a written scenario or practical exercise, identify or demonstrate methods to disseminate information to the public, field units, and other agencies using standard communication and dispatching techniques.

Criteria for Testing: The trainee shall be tested on the following:

- 1.4.1. Method(s) to provide non-confidential information to the public.
- 1.4.2. Communication with officer(s) by radio or computer to check status and safety.
- 1.4.3. Providing descriptive information of missing person(s), suspect(s), vehicle(s), etc.
- 1.4.4. Summarizing incident information received for dispatching calls for service via radio.
 - 1.4.4.1. Listen to caller
 - 1.4.4.2. Read recorded information
 - 1.4.4.3. Transmit information to field units and receive information from field units.
 - 1.4.4.4. Document required information
 - 1.4.4.5. Relay, provide, and update incident information to field units
 - 1.4.4.6. Dispatch field units to calls for service

Lesson Plan Guide: The lesson plan shall include the following at a minimum:

1. Method(s) to provide non-confidential information to the public.
2. Communication with field units to check status and safety.
3. Providing descriptive information of missing person(s), suspect(s), vehicle(s)
 - a. Person description
 - 1). Ethnic background/color of skin
 - 2). Gender
 - 3). Approximate age
 - 4). Approximate height/weight/build
 - 5). Hair color/facial hair (beard, mustache)
 - 6). Eye color/glasses
 - 7). Clothing (generally try to describe person from head to toe)
 - a). Headwear (baseball cap, ski mask, hat with brim, etc.)
 - b). Coat/jacket (type and color)
 - c). Shirt/blouse color (long or short sleeved)
 - d). Pants/belt/dress/skirt color (type – jeans, mini-skirt, etc.)
 - e). Shoes (type and color) (white Nike, black pumps, etc.)
 - 8). Any known medical conditions
 - 9). Direction of travel/location last seen
 - 10). Weapon seen/type/description
 - 11). Distinguishing characteristics
 - a). Scars, marks, tattoos
 - b). Voice characteristics
 - c). Any others that help with identification
 - b. Vehicle -- the acronym CYMBALS may help a trainee to remember to ask for the first seven items listed.
 - 1). Color (top to bottom – burgundy top, black bottom, etc.)
 - 2). Year
 - 3). Make/Model (Toyota Camry; Ford Taurus, etc.)
 - 4). Body style (sports car, sedan, station wagon, van, etc.)
 - 5). Additional information
 - a). Unusual markings (anything unusual on the vehicle that will help identify it)
 - b). Number of occupants
 - 6). License Plate Number (or partial)
 - 7). State
 - 8). Direction of travel

4. Summarizing incident information received for dispatching calls for service via radio.
 - a. Listen to caller
 - b. Read recorded information
 - c. Transmit information to field unit and receive information from field unit.
 - d. Type in required information
 - e. Relay, provide, and update incident information to field units
 - f. Dispatch field units to calls for service
 - g. Issue case or incident number, if applicable, and other information as required

Instructor Note: Advise trainees that they will learn department policy on safety checks and policy on information release during on-the-job training.

Performance Outcome 1.5

Apply standard communication techniques when handling specialized situations via radio, telephone, and in person.

Training Objective 1.5

- A. Given a written scenario or practical exercise, identify or demonstrate the steps involved in receiving, handling, and dispatching complaints or requests related to specialized situations identified in the criteria for testing.
- B. Given a written scenario or practical exercise, identify or demonstrate the steps involved in handling callers involved in specialized situations identified in the criteria for testing.

Criteria for Testing: The trainee shall be tested on the following:

- 1.5.1 Contacting other agencies to obtain information and resources for the following types of incidents via radio, telephone, or other electronic media:
 - 1.5.1.1. Mutual aid
 - 1.5.1.2. Officer safety
 - 1.5.1.3. Incident status
 - 1.5.1.4. Restricted and confidential information
 - 1.5.1.5. General assistance
 - 1.5.1.6. Miscellaneous requests
- 1.5.2. Obtaining information, dispatching, and coordinating units for responding to two of the following specialized calls and incidents simultaneously:
 - 1.5.2.1. SWAT
 - 1.5.2.2. K-9
 - 1.5.2.3. Investigations
 - 1.5.2.4. High speed pursuits
 - 1.5.2.5. Hazmat
 - 1.5.2.6. Water rescue
 - 1.5.2.7. Prison/jail breaks
 - 1.5.2.8. Disaster drills and situations
 - 1.5.2.9. Aviation crash
 - 1.5.2.10. Missing person in unusual terrain

- 1.5.3. Communicating effectively and maintaining contact with persons involved in the following specialized calls:
 - 1.5.3.1. Crisis and/or panic situations
 - 1.5.3.2. Mentally impaired, unstable or suicidal caller
 - 1.5.3.3. Intoxicated caller/irate or abusive caller
 - 1.5.3.4. Child caller
 - 1.5.3.5. Elderly caller
 - 1.5.3.6. Non-English speaking caller
 - 1.5.3.7. False or nuisance calls
 - 1.5.3.8. Media calls
 - 1.5.3.9. Silent calls (TDD)
 - 1.5.3.10. Cell phone caller unable to identify location

Lesson Plan Guide: The lesson plan shall include the following at a minimum:

1. Contacting other agencies to obtain information and resources for the following types of incidents via radio or telephone:
 - a. Mutual aid
 - b. Officer safety
 - c. Incident status
 - d. Restricted and confidential information
 - e. General assistance
 - f. Miscellaneous requests
2. Obtaining information, dispatching, and coordinating units for the following specialized calls and incidents:
 - a. SWAT
 - b. K-9
 - c. Investigations
 - d. High speed pursuits
 - e. Hazmat
 - f. Water rescue
 - g. Prison/jail breaks
 - h. Disaster drills and situations
 - i. Aviation crash
 - j. Missing person in unusual terrain
 - k. Train wrecks
 - l. Hostage/barricade calls
 - m. Cell phone caller unable to identify location
3. Communicating effectively and maintaining contact with persons involved in the following specialized calls:
 - a. Crisis and/or panic situations
 - b. Mentally impaired, unstable or suicidal caller
 - c. Intoxicated caller
 - d. Child caller
 - e. Elderly caller
 - f. Non-English speaking caller
 - g. False or nuisance calls
 - h. Media calls
4. Monitoring and responding to alarm systems, if applicable.

<p>Instructor Note: Advise trainees of the importance of becoming familiar with resource available in their jurisdiction.</p>
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Performance Outcome 1.6

Assist caller(s) by providing initial emergency medical care information (pre-arrival instructions) to victims of accidents, illness and/or crimes. (**On-the-Job Training, if applicable**)

Training Objective 1.6

- A. Given a practical exercise, provide initial emergency medical instructions/information (pre-arrival instructions) to victims of an accident.
- B. Given a practical exercise, provide initial emergency medical care instructions/information (pre-arrival instructions) to victims of an illness.
- C. Given a practical exercise, provide initial emergency medical care instructions/information (pre-arrival instructions) to victims of a crime.

Criteria for Testing: The trainee shall be tested on the following:

- 1.6.1. Obtaining information and dispatching appropriate emergency medical unit(s).
- 1.6.2. Identifying appropriate protocol based upon caller information.
- 1.6.3. Reading verbatim medical protocol to provide assistance to caller until help arrives.

NOTE: This standard may be achieved by completing an approved course for training emergency medical dispatchers. Approved courses include: APCO/ NENA, Medical Priority, Power Phone, National Communications Institute, or a program approved by the Operational Medical Director of a local emergency medical services (EMS) provider.

Lesson Plan Guide: The lesson plan shall include the following at a minimum:

1. Obtaining information and dispatching emergency medical unit(s).
 - a. 911 – where is your emergency?
 - b. Listen to the caller because the person will often be in a panic and give you a lot of information without asking. Calm person and ask questions to fill in anything you need to determine type of medical emergency. Dispatch appropriate medical response units as soon as you have enough information to judge type of response needed. Initial key questions include:
 - 1). Where is the person who needs assistance? (specific location)
 - 2). Is the person conscious?
 - 3). Is person breathing? Bleeding?
 - 4). What is the person's approximate age?
 - 5). Can you tell me what type of injury the person has?
 - 6). Is the person taking any medications? If so, what type and how much? Can someone gather the medications and have them available for the EMS personnel?
2. Read verbatim a medical protocol (pre-arrival instructions) to provide assistance to caller until help arrives.
 - a. Read the guide accurately and clearly.
 - b. Get feedback from caller and repeat steps when necessary.

Instructor Note: Advise trainees that they will provide emergency medical care information/instructions (pre-arrival instructions) based on the protocol approved by their agency.

Performance Outcome 1.7

Respond to a report of a disaster.

Training Objective 1.7

Given a written exercise, identify the dispatcher's response to disaster situations.

Criteria for Testing: The trainee will be tested on the following:

- 1.7.1 The relevance of emergency communications plans for dispatchers and other emergency service providers.
- 1.7.2. Three specific examples of law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical service situations that require a pre-planned response.
- 1.7.3 The specific role of dispatchers in law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical services, emergency management plans.
- 1.7.4. An example of a local incident that could result in a response by federal emergency resources by declaration of emergency.
- 1.7.5. Emergency warning communications systems and the dispatcher's role when a national emergency has been reported to the communications center.
- 1.7.6. Definitions of the following:
 - a. Warning
 - b. Weather warning, weather watch, and weather advisory
 - c. Man-made disaster (e.g., riot, bombings, etc.)
 - d. Natural disaster
 - e. Nuclear/biological disaster

Lesson Plan Guide: The lesson plan shall include the following at a minimum:

1. The relevance of emergency communications plans for dispatchers and other emergency service providers.
2. Three specific examples of law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical service situations that require a pre-planned response.
3. The specific role of dispatcher's in law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical services, and emergency management plans.
4. An example of a local incident that could result in a response by federal emergency resources by declaration of emergency.
5. Emergency warning communications systems and the dispatcher's role when a national emergency has been reported to the communications center.
 - a. Monitoring and responding civil defense networks and warning systems.
6. Definitions of the following:
 - a. Warning
 - b. Weather warning vs. weather watch
 - c. Man-made disaster
 - d. Natural disaster

Instructor Note: Advise trainees to become familiar with their agency's Emergency Operations Plan and know where to find it.
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